

Parking Garage Schmaltz

by artisticBiologist

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Summary: Gordon and Alyx are attempting to escape from City 17 before the reactor blows- but Gordon is reluctant to leave her side.

Oneshot. T for mention of sexual situations. Hope you all like your Gordon x Alyx with a lot of cheese.

Parking Garage Schmaltz

A parking garage. Of all the lousy, terrifying places they could have landed in, it had to be a fucking parking garage.

And let's not forget that the damned lights were on the fritz.

You would not believe how frightening these places could get. There were all sorts of concrete support beams and rusted out vehicles that antlions and zombies (and, of course, zom_bines) could hide behind. Not to mention the fact that parking garages were built in squarish spirals, giving Gordon and Alyx plenty of blind corners to navigate around.

They came across another door that needed a power source in order to open. That meant Gordon would have to find a wall panel and flip it to "on".

"Alright Gordon, I think you're going to have to go down there," Alyx pointed to the level below them. The floor had caved in, and the rubble was piled in such a way that he could climb down. The level had almost completely flooded, and the HEV suit's Geiger counter didn't sound too happy about the quality of the water.

Gordon sighed. Of course, he'd have to climb in from below. The terminal must have been on the other side of the door, because it was certainly nowhere he could see it. He wouldn't want life to make things easy for him.

"I'll wait for you here," Alyx said.

He turned to her, wide-eyed. His eyebrows turned upward in a fearful, upset expression.

"What's the matter, Gordon? Get moving," she urged. "That flashlight battery won't last forever."

"Iâ€¦ I can'tâ€¦," he mumbled. "Come with me."

"â€¦ Gordon, there's something down there that's radioactive! I can't," she answered, frustrated.

"Then let me look for another way out," he begged. "â€¦ I can't go down there alone."

"What's the big deal? You've done plenty of stuff like this on your own before, what's so-" she began.

"I didn't have you before!" he blurted out. "I can't leave you here in the dark all by yourself!"

"â€¦ Gordon, I'm okay," she gave him her trademark smile, the one where her eyebrows turned up and she grinned from ear to ear, silently reassuring him that everything would be alright. "I've been through worse. I'll be fine here, I promise."

"Youâ€¦ you don't understandâ€¦ I can'tâ€¦," he tried to put the words together, but for all his education there was just no way to form the sentence.

"Gordon 'effing Freeman," she said angrily. "If you don't go down there and hit the power switch right now, we're not going to get out of here in time. The Citadel is going to explode, and I have no intention of getting caught in the middle of it! Now get your nerdy white ass in gear!"

"I can't leave you again, Alyx! I can't do it! I never, ever want to see youâ€¦," he paused, unwilling to dredge up the memory. "â€¦ I never want to see you like you were on the train. Not ever again."

"The wha-?" she stopped mid-sentence. She'd almost forgotten.

Their train had crashed, and she'd ended up pinned on the opposite side of the car by a screaming Stalker. Gordon had been in a similar situation, and he'd fought and crawled for what felt like hours to get to her and pry the wretched thing away. She'd had to stop and rest for a bit while the shock wore off.

"â€¦ that's what this is about?" she wondered quietly. Her speech quickly became bolder, louder. "It's okay, Gordon! That's not gonna happen again. I'mâ€¦ you got it off of me! I'm fine now!"

"â€¦ but I should have gotten it off of you sooner," he refused to look her in the eye. "I should have been there right away, but I couldn't reach you."

"Gordonâ€¦," she started, but couldn't finish.

There was a long silence between them. Finally, Alyx spoke

up.

"You've seen me out there. I've got a much better chance than you at surviving, actually. I'm the only one with bullets right now," she said defiantly.

It was true. He'd emptied his handgun into a pack of approaching zombies, and used up his shotgun shells on antlions as they headed straight for Alyx. All he had left was the gravity gun and a few rocks. With any luck, he'd find more ammunition soon, but she was still absolutely right. She had an excellent chance at surviving.

â€| the fact failed to comfort him.

"And besides, what do you care anyway?" she continued. "You don't need me to hold your hand all the time. You're Gordon Freeman, PhD. You can handle this. Just get to the power box and I'll see you in two minutes. You can do two minutes, can't you?"

He looked dejectedly up at her. "No. I can't."

"Why the hell not?" she screamed. "Whatever happened to the hero everybody used to talk about? Whatever happened to the brave Gordon Freeman, who singlehandedly stopped the worst excesses of the Black Mesa Incident?"

"That man isn't me any more!" he yelled. "I have more to live for than he did! And I'm not a goddamned**hero**!"

â€| the flashlight picked this inopportune moment to fizzle out.

Alyx stared into the darkness at the spot where Gordon stood. After a moment, the flashlight recharged and he was able to turn the beam on again. He'd been looking in her direction the whole time as well, pitch black though it was.

"â€| Gordon Freeman, circa 200-. The only thing I was concerned with was my career. I was so eager to work on anti-matter resonance that I ignored the instability of the specimen I was studying. Not to mention the fact that there were several major problems with the technology that day. Through my negligence, I singlehandedly caused the resonance cascade that led to the Combine invasion of earth. You were only six at the time. I barely knew who you were," he explained. "â€| when the explosions started, Iâ€| I had nothing left to lose. People had died because of me. A lot of people. People still die because of what I'm doing. Knowing that, I didn't care about myself. I justâ€| I just wanted to fix things! But now? Now that's all changed."

"â€| Gordon, what are you trying to say with all this?" she wondered reluctantly. She didn't know if she liked where this was going.

"Alyx, when it was just me out here I wasn't afraid. Now that you're with me, Iâ€|," he faltered.

"â€| you what? Spit it out, Gordon!"

"Alyx, there's something about you that I just can't go on without! Before, I was fighting for survival. Now it feels like the only reason I'm fighting is to get to you!" he cried. The flashlight ran out of battery again but he continued anyway. Not having to look into those beautiful brown eyes of hers made the words come easier. "As long as you're with me, I feel like I can take on the world. But when you're away from me I just feel weak and afraid! I worry about you, Alyx, because without you I'd be lost!"

Without meaning to, Gordon hit the flashlight's on switch. Alyx squinted her eyes shut. He'd shined it in her face. Flustered, he pointed the beam at her stomach. The nervous blush on his cheeks was all too noticeable.

"â€| nice," she said sarcastically. It was the only way she could think of to diffuse the tension.

"â€| sorry," he choked.

She glanced at him. He was near tears. Surely he didn't feel that bad about a temporary blinding!

"Sorry for what? It's no big deal," she said sweetly, trying to force a chuckle.

"For everythingâ€|," he trembled a little. "I'm not the man you thought I was."

At this admission he could hold it back no longer, and a strangled sob escaped his lips.

"Breen was right about me!" Gordon was crying openly now, gazing at her with dejected, teary eyes. "I'm not some agent provocateur, I'm not a highly trained assassin, and I'm certainly not a hero. I'm just a theoretical physicist in a HAZMAT suit. The man you've put so much stock in, the man you've fed your hopes and dreams to all these years, is just thatâ€| an ordinary man."

"Gordon, don't you dare start quoting Breen! That's only gonna lead you down a dark path!" Alyx yelled at him. He cringed, withering under the force of her voice. Again, the flashlight blinked out.

"I don't think you're a hero," she said to the darkness. Gordon didn't wait for the light to fully recharge, shining it at his own face to give her a skeptical look.

"â€| well, okay, I do, but that's just from observation," she admitted. "When you disappeared, everyone figured you were dead. But they allâ€| y'know, hoped you weren't. So we talked about you, all the time. And it wasn't all about your escapades, either."

He brightened a little bit at this. Encouraged, she continued. "Those commando stories were usually blown way out of proportion, anyway! We mostly talked about stuff you and the guys used to do at Black Mesa. What kind of person you were. What kinds of jokes you liked to make. How muchâ€| everybody missed you."

"â€| can I ask you something, then?" he whispered, unsure of himself.

"Sure, fire away," she masked her excitement as best she could.

"â€¦ do you like the kind of person they made me out to be? _Could_ you like that person for who he was, and not what he's done?" he asked, voice still trembling a little.

"I already _do_."

The silence hung around them like a mist, making their minds race and their bodies itch for contact. Gordon wanted nothing more than to hold her against him, with one hand wrapped in the coarse tangle of hair on her head and the other firmly holding her ass. He yearned to kiss her, to whisper all the words he'd kept bottled up inside for so long, to nip at her ear and make her squirm in his powerful grasp.

Alyx wanted to tear that HEV suit right off his body just to see if he was wearing anything underneath, and to run her dexterous fingers down his bare chest until he whimpered with need. She wanted his goatee to scratch her mouth as she kissed him, passionately and eagerly. She _wanted_ him to cup her ass, to shove his clumsy fingers unceremoniously between her legs. It didn't matter that the Citadel would blow soon. Their lust was about to erupt just as violently.

So _this_ was what it felt like to be rid of the suppression field.

"Well then you'd better get going," she told him, pushing away her needs. "Or neither one of us is going to be around much longer."

"â€¦ please let me find another way. I can't leave you in the dark."

Alyx groaned frustratedly. There had to be a way to convince him they would be alright for the next few minutes while he powered up the door. She glanced around, hoping something would inspire her.

Her gaze rested on a flare.

"Hold on!" she rushed over to it, shoving a cinderblock out of her way. She picked up the flare and turned back to him, lighting it as she stood in a single, fluid motion. "There. Not in the dark. Not gonna be scared. Just hurry back and we'll be right on our way again."

He paused for a moment, seemingly unconvinced.

Please Gordon, ****please**** don't make this any harder than it has to beâ€¦, _she thought desperately. _Don't force my hand. You wouldn't have to twist my arm much more to get me to stay here and make love to you in the dark until this whole place gets blown to kingdom come._

"â€¦ hold that flare up a little more, and stand here, at the top of the rubble," Gordon indicated.

"Wha? Okay," she snorted, willing to do just about anything at this point to get him along his way.

"Do your best to stay where I can see you for as long as possible," he said, dropping into the water below. "If I can keep you in my line of sight, I don't worry. When I look at you, I'm not afraid."

He backed away, water sloshing about the boots of his hazard suit. He kept an ear out for zombies, as well as splashes that were not his own. There could be sneaky bastards in this pool. But he kept his eyes on Alyx as he descended into the increasing blackness. So long as she kept that flare going, he would have its soft red glow to guide him into the depths.

It wasn't long before he spotted an open door, hanging ajar on rusted hinges. He couldn't see the flare any more; it must have gone out. It didn't matter anyway; he would have to go away from her now.

"I can talk to me, Alyx," he called.

"Um, okay. Do you need me to talk you through something?" she called back.

"No, I just wanna hear your voice. I know it's not the best idea, but just, just do this for me, okay? We seem to have cleared out this area pretty good, there shouldn't be anything around to hear you but me. Plus I wouldn't be asking if I didn't think it was safe," he reassured her as he pried the grating off of an air duct.

"Um, okay. Err," she mumbled, and paused for a long moment. "Ugh, I can't think of anything to say!"

"Just count, then. Or if you feel like it, you can recite something you've memorized. Whenever you test a microphone that's what they tell you to do. I used to recite something easy, you know? Like Newton's laws."

"I think I prefer to count," she said, teasing. "One, two, three, four," she continued.

The sound of her voice echoed down into the blackness, reverberating across the metal duct with a gentle, tinny ring. It comforted him. Her voice was soft and smooth, almost as much so her dark skin. But there was an exciting quality to it, like everything that came out of her mouth was suffused and dripping with an unseen force. Her boldness or her attitude, perhaps. She had a powerful tone about her. All of her: voice, mind, and body, was smooth and rich and strong, like a honeyed lager.

As Gordon finally clambered out of the vent and located the door mechanism, he wondered if it was really fair to compare her to alcohol. Of course, she really was intoxicating, and he always felt pleasantly stupid whenever she was around.

A few lights buzzed loudly and flickered on. The sudden rush of illumination burned Gordon's eyes and he had to hold a hand up to shield himself for a moment. When he felt his irises relax and lowered the hand, he nearly jumped. Alyx had already come into the room and was standing in front of him, sporting her trademark smile.

"See? That wasn't so bad," she smirked.

End
file.